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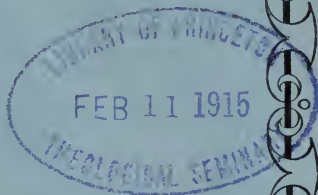
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[NEW SERIES.

THE

English



Presbyterian Messenger.

APRIL, 1857.



LONDON:

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Our Missionaries in China.—Letters have been received from Mr. Burns, dated Swatow, December 31st, and from Mr. Douglas, dated Amoy, January 9th. They were then quite well, and, notwithstanding the disturbances in some parts of China, were prosecuting their work without hindrance.

Anonymous Communications are not admissible.

THE "JUVENILE MESSENGER."

A few copies of Volumes I. and II. are still on hand, and may be had of Messrs. Marlborough & Co., Ave Maria Lane. Price One Shilling each.

PSALMODY COMMITTEE NOTICE.

Two Copies of the "Paraphrases and Hymns; a Supplement to the Psalmody hitherto in use in the Presbyterian Church in England," will be sent down to each Minister of the Church on or before the 4th of April instant. One copy is intended for each representative Elder coming up to the Synod.

In the name of the Committee,
J. WEIR, *Convener.*

London, April 1st, 1857.

SCOTS' CHURCH, LONDON WALL, LONDON.

A BAZAAR

In aid of the FUNDS for the NEW CHURCH now erecting for the *Congregation* of the *Scots' Church, London Wall*, will be held in MYDDLETON HALL, UPPER STREET, ISLINGTON, on the *4th, 5th, and 6th of May*.

CONTRIBUTIONS of the various sorts of Ladies' Work—plain and fancy—Drawings, Prints, Books, Curiosities, and Useful and Ornamental Articles in general, are earnestly solicited, and will be received by

- Mrs. Gray, 12, York Place, Albion Road, Stoke Newington.
- Mrs. Chambers, 14, Camden Square, Camden Town.
- Mrs. Miller, 37, Cornhill, City.
- Mrs. Tulloch, 23, Arlington Square, Islington.
- Mrs. Ballantyne, 37, Englefield Road, De Beauvoir Town.

Or of any of the Ladies connected with the Congregation.

London, March, 1857.

Just published, price 6s. 6d.

A Memoir of the late Rev. Eustace Carey. By Mrs. Carey.

Pewtress & Co., Ave Maria Lane, London; and may be had of all Booksellers.

THE ENGLISH

PRESBYTERIAN MESSENGER.

CHINA AND THE OPIUM TRADE.

WE are now at war with part of China, and may naturally expect ere long to be at war with the whole empire. The emperor doubtless is anxious to keep the sound of the cannon as far from his own ears as may be; and would be glad that we should fight it out with the Cantonese a thousand miles from his palace at Pekin. The mandarins also at the other ports along the coast, besides that they and their people are more friendly than Yeh and the Canton rabble, will be happy to obey the orders of the emperor and to keep quiet; for by this conduct they may save their own persons and make a fair profit out of the additional business passing through their city during the interruption to trade at the south. Nevertheless, war, like fire, must spread unless very speedily brought to a close, and our statesmen seem to have no intention to pause till they have conversed with his "celestial" majesty in his own chief city.

We are at war with China, and it is now of little consequence discussing the particulars of the sudden plunge we have made into active hostilities. There may be disputes about "the proper moment," and "the most favourable opportunity;" but there is no difference of opinion among those who know China as to the necessity of carrying on the war vigorously now that we are engaged in it, neither is there much doubt as to the inevitability of the crisis, sooner or later, owing to the faithless and cruel conduct of the Chinese who were rapidly filling up the cup of their iniquities.

Some such collision was unavoidable, and we may now set aside criticism on the final affront, which merely precipitated matters.

Leaving the *modus operandi*, the conduct of the war to our naval and military chiefs, the people of this country ought so far to make themselves acquainted with the position of our affairs in China as to enable them to arrive at correct opinions regarding the proper course to be pursued by our statesmen at this critical juncture.

The popularisation of our constitution has brought with it to every individual conscience, a more direct responsibility for all that is done by the representatives of the nation at home and abroad.

It is understood that our envoy will insist, very properly, on formal communication with the highest authorities in the land; that he will

further insist on the continuance of regular communication between the British and Chinese officials, which is essential to our safe and honourable residence in that country. He will also demand permission for all Britons to travel throughout China, under such general regulations regarding passports, etc., as are deemed desirable in some other countries; though, as we give the Chinese free admission to every part of the British dominions, we might claim a similar liberty there.

But what is to be done with the opium trade?

The opium trade does not appear to have had any connection with the present embroilment. Had it been the cause of the continued bad behaviour of the Cantonese, the same manifestations of animosity might have been looked for all along the coast where the opium ships have long been carrying on their traffic. The people and the mandarins in these quarters have, however, exhibited no such acerbity of spirit towards foreigners.

Whilst settling our other affairs in China, it will be right surely to see that the opium traffic—which is by much the larger portion of our import trade there—be also put to rights.

What are we to do with it? Are we to allow it to go on as at present? Shall we compel the Chinese to legalise it? or must we put it down ourselves?

Mr. Donald Matheson, formerly of China, has given important evidence on this subject, in a pamphlet just published, entitled, "What is the Opium Trade?"

This gentleman has had the amplest means of ascertaining the truth of this matter. He has a clear and well-balanced mind; and has delivered sentence of condemnation on the article as smoked by the Chinese, and on the traffic as illegal, in terms so decided, plain, and unimpassioned, that appeal seems hopeless.

At the end of last century, a few hundred chests of opium annually found their way from India to China, and the article was admitted as legal merchandise.

The ill effects of opium smoking, and the drain of silver in payment, led the authorities to prohibit the further introduction of the drug into China. Gradually, however, an illegal trade has grown up to large dimensions; the importations now exceeding 70,000 chests per annum. This quantity, after being boiled and specially prepared, yields about 5,000,000 pounds weight of smokeable extract, and it costs the Chinese £7,000,000 sterling.

Does this smoking injure the people, or may opium be used like tobacco, wine, or spirits, temperately? Mr. Matheson says—

"Those who would compare this with drinking wine, or ale, or even spirits in moderation, must be unwilling to look at it in its true light. The only comparison that can be made is between opium smoking and drunkenness."

The indulgence is in every case an intoxication :

"The Chinese unquestionably look upon the indulgence as a vice, and not as a harmless luxury"; and they say, "when a man smokes opium that he is making his own coffin. But the injury done by this habit is not confined to the individual; it brings families to misery and ruin; it tempts to crime, and, being illegal, it leads to the demoralisation of those engaged in the retail trade; and what is worst of all, it is spreading rapidly."

How can this drug find its way into China if the people regard it "as a vice," and the authorities prohibit it?

There is an old adage—*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*. They also see the evil, and in a measure deplore it; but the vice is too ensnaring, they cannot resist the temptation, and will give any price, and run any risk for the indulgence. Even in the civilised west, popular vices are too strong for the powers that be, and in China it is so in an aggravated degree. Opium is intensely craved by the victims; the mandarins cannot prevent them getting it, they therefore generally connive at the infraction of the laws, and turn the disobedience to account. The British flag floats over the vessels whence it is smuggled on the coast, and the British Indian Government grows and prepares it specially for the China market!

What good can the East India Company get by poisoning millions of these poor people? (All victims of vicious passion are poor and miserable people.) Get? They get a net income of nearly £4,000,000 sterling. They do not allow any opium to be grown in their own territories, excepting for their own monopoly; and from the sales in Calcutta of the quantity they thus produce they derive a net profit of £2,500,000 to £3,000,000, and the rest of the above £4,000,000 is the amount of a transit duty of £40 per chest on opium grown in the independent state of Malwa, which, being in the interior of Hindostan, has no outlet but through the Company's dominion.

What is to be done with this trade? The great body of Christian missionaries on the spot condemn it as hurtful to mankind, as directly and indirectly opposed to the Gospel, as derogatory to the British name, and, especially, as inconsistent in the eyes of the heathen with the reputation of faith in Jesus. It ought not to remain in its present position. The article is deleterious as used by the Chinese, and the traffic is illegal.

Shall we compel the Chinese to legalise it? That would doubtless remove a certain portion of the disgrace attaching to it, and of the mischiefs accompanying the trade as now carried on. But it is extremely doubtful whether we could succeed in the attempt to coerce them into this measure, and not at all doubtful that we have no right to force them to take any such step. Moreover, it would not meet the full requirements of the case.

Must we put down the traffic ourselves? How could we do that? It would obviously be absurdity in the extreme for British authority to interfere with traffic in the article when it had once reached the shores of China. The only way to deal with the evil is to dry up the source; that is, to put an end to the cultivation of the white poppy in India. The traffic would at once disappear when this supply of the article failed.

Why was this not done long ago, and before this bad business had attained so unwieldy a magnitude? Which Ministry or which party in the State is to blame for this delay? It is not a party question at all. Every Government, Whig and Tory, for many years has either sanctioned or connived at it.

Mr. Matheson proposes a gradual reduction of the supply—"Let the 70,000 chests now exported, be annually reduced by 5,000 or 10,000 chests, etc." And Major-General Anderson, of the Madras army, whose important testimony in the shape of four letters on this subject addressed to Lord Shaftesbury, appeared in the middle of last year, also recommends a gradual reduction of the growth in India.

The better plan, however, would be to put an end to the growth at once. Those gradual escapes from a false position are never satisfactory. We tried to abolish slavery in our own West Indian Islands by degrees, but were compelled to terminate the process abruptly.

A few Chinese might die were they suddenly deprived of their daily supply; but many more might be permanently saved from the vice and the misery of the ensnaring indulgence, were the breaking of the habit altogether inevitable.

A sudden and entire stoppage on our part would make it difficult, if not impossible, for any other nation to take up our position as panderer to this sin.

Were we to retire gradually, the habit of smoking would remain unbroken, whilst others might have time, by degrees, to foster the cultivation elsewhere, and so less good might result.

The Chinese grow some now, in out-of-the-way places. How much we cannot tell—it has been stated at 10,000 or 20,000 chests. At any rate they might raise enough to keep the incurables alive; and if they made more they would have the responsibility entirely on their own shoulders.

Mr. Matheson says: "The British public have the power, through their Parliament," and should use their "influence with the East India Company that, the cultivation of the poppy for the Chinese market may cease, for the plain reason that it is sent to supply a vicious and illegal demand."

It would be no violation of the sound principle of politico-economic science thus to put an end to opium growing in India. It would merely be the withdrawal of the East India Company from an injurious monopoly, that monopoly being itself contrary to all right views of trade or manufacture. Besides, if merely for financial reasons we prohibit the growth of tobacco in the British Isles, surely for far nobler reasons we may prohibit the growth of this drug in India.

Would the national sacrifice be too great, even were the revenue to suffer for some years? When slavery was to be abolished, did we hesitate to sacrifice twenty millions sterling? When the national honour is at stake, do we shrink from an outlay of hundreds of millions in war? Surely our national honour in peace is not unworthy of some sacrifice. The sacrifice would not be very great, and would only be temporary, and would be followed by incalculable benefits to ourselves and to mankind.

The merchants now engaged in this traffic would obtain enormous prices for the stocks they might have on hand, and might leave the trade with large fortunes; but if in some cases it might be otherwise, they would not be much worse off than many who even now voluntarily abstain from gains they cannot approve of.

Some anxious people have admitted the terrible results of opium smoking and the great mischief of the illegal traffic, but have lamented the utter impossibility of doing anything to remedy or remove the evil. They think this trade, though bad, must be maintained, as the sacrifice of four millions of revenue by the East India Company would ruin our empire in Hindostan, and the absence of opium, which is worth seven millions sterling on the coasts of China, would endanger the stability of the British constitution and nation, because without opium we could not buy our tea or silk, and the falling off in the import of tea would hamper our Chancellor of the Exchequer and upset all our domestic arrangements!

There is no ground for any such alarm. Though for the moment the Indian Government cannot get the loan of money readily, this does not arise from any want of confidence in the stability of British power, or any alarm at the failing resources of that country. The difficulty simply springs from some financial mismanagement of the authorities, who are supposed not to have kept faith about late loans, and so capitalists hang back a little.

The physical resources of India were never, however, in a more hopeful position than now. Various important public works are in progress; and, under the influence of steam, irrigation, railways, and electric telegraphs, to say nothing of improving methods of rule, so rapid an advance may be reasonably anticipated (with God's blessing on these means) in the cultivation of the land and the prosperity of the people, that the Government may in a few years draw with ease double or treble the present revenue if found necessary.

This last year we have taken from China about 90,000,000lbs. of tea, and pay for it about £4,500,000 sterling; and we have taken about 70,000 bales of silk, which is nearly double the usual quantity, and being high priced, we must pay for it £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 sterling. This last year we must have paid China, in one shape or other, £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 sterling, and, on an average of years, may have about £8,000,000 to pay. China takes about £1,500,000 sterling worth of British manufactures, and from £500,000 to £1,000,000 worth of Indian cotton, rice, and Straits' produce; opium pays the rest, and generally takes away, in addition to tea and silk, a quantity of silver. The current of coin has this season been towards China, owing to the additional value of the silk export.

If we have no more opium to give, the Chinese will demand silver instead, and where are we to get £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 sterling in silver coin to meet this necessity? If the opium trade is doing mischief to mankind, we must wash our hands of it at any price, and the blessing of God will rest on the sacrifice.

But the way out of this commercial exchange difficulty is not so dark as some would have us believe. We might for a short while content ourselves with rather less tea and silk, until the Chinese learnt to take from us what we can afford to give.

We might, without danger send them silver for a year or two for part of their produce, and we can easily imagine such arrangements here and in India as would speedily remedy any temporary inconvenience—as for instance, the Indian Government, which, a few years ago, put a stop to a gold circulation, and has thereby caused a drain for silver, from this may restore that gold circulation, with manifest advantage to all parties. The British Government, by a judicious and ample, yet moderate, issue of paper money, might get far more than enough for the requirements of the trade.

But one true remedy will be found in the increased ability of the Chinese to take our manufactures, and when the barriers to free intercourse have been broken down, our merchants will speedily find out what the Celestials will take on terms much to our advantage.

If the article causes so much misery, and the trade is so derogatory to the character of a Christian nation, we should have done with it at once, at whatever sacrifice, were that ten times greater than the most timid can apprehend.

The blessing of God maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow, and it rests only on good doing.

In reply to those who think that, if we cannot make sure that the Chinese will not get the deleterious article somewhere else, we need not abstain from the wickedness, Mr. Matheson simply quotes Matthew xviii. 7—"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

STANLEY'S "SINAI AND PALESTINE."

THE Holy Scriptures, providentially for the sympathies implanted by God in the human heart, are not a new catalogue of laws and precepts admirable only for their own sakes, and interesting the mind of man merely by the moral beauty and holiness of their spirit; but those laws and commandments, those great lessons and instructions which God has in his goodness given to illuminate the otherwise dark career of the human family, and develope his plans for the restitution to holiness of his fallen, but still rational and immortal creatures, have been so interwoven with the history of one of the families of men, that all our human sympathies are touched by the records of this branch of our race.

This people, a type of all mankind, were led through a series of the most wonderful providences for their discipline and our instruction. Around them and their history all our earliest religious associations are clustered; the stories we heard at our mother's knees of Joseph and his brethren, of the bondage in Egypt and the glorious deliverance, of the wondrous way made through the waters, the awful voice of God in the desert, and the triumphant march into the long-promised inheritance, were the delight of our childhood; and all that we have read and heard since that time has but increased the interest we feel in their country and its history.

In the nature of things, it was certain that every trace that could be obtained of such a history, of their wanderings and triumphs, their kingdom and cities, would awaken a desire to see spots so famous in sacred story. And this has been the case. For more than a thousand years, pilgrims have gone from the uttermost parts of the earth to gaze with earnest eye on those blessed acres whereon the feet of the Redeemer trod, and to mark with glowing hearts the city of the Great King, Mount Zion—the subject of their songs in distant lands. To wrest these holy places from the hands of those who revered not the name of Jesus, all Christendom threw itself with fiery zeal on the East, and the crusaders waded in blood to pray on the ground hallowed by the Prince of Peace.

From that time till the present, the interest has not only been kept up, but has steadily increased, and every accurate contribution to our knowledge of the localities of these events has been hailed as a boon by all who intelligently study their Bibles. One of the most recent works of interest on this subject is the admirable volume of Mr. Stanley, entitled "Sinai and Palestine."

This volume is the production of an earnest student of cultivated taste and very considerable learning, who at home had become thoroughly acquainted with the history of the people whose land he was afterwards to visit, and

who has made himself master of the works of his predecessors in the same field of observation.

There is a freshness in his ideas that gives a great interest to the work; it is not a mere itinerary or note-book of a journey: the facts, and scenes, and impressions, have been digested at leisure and wrought into interesting and eloquent dissertations.

There have been no attempts at merely giving highly coloured and captivating pictures, which often lead travellers unconsciously to exaggerate and distort; and he has likewise carefully avoided that flippant tone which disfigures the pages of some of our otherwise interesting narratives, and which in the present day is thought an indispensable requisite for fine writing.

We must not omit to mention that which has added in no small degree to our interest in Mr. Stanley's work—we mean the admirable maps with which it is illustrated. These maps give a clear idea of the surface of the country; its hills and plains, its rivers and lakes, as they are coloured to represent the nature of the rocks, or vegetation, or tracts of forest, and wastes of sand.

The first part of the volume is occupied with an account of Sinai, and to this spot, connected with the most momentous event in the history of the Jews, let us follow him a little.

When we approach a place illustrious in history for the great events which have there occurred, our powers of association are called into active exercise; but sometimes these associations are disturbed and their reversion diminished when we remember that, since the event we have immediately in view, others of perhaps equal magnitude have passed over the scene, each to some extent obliterating the traces of its predecessor. This is the case when we visit Italy and Greece; the stage has been cleared again and again, and each scene divides our interest in the spot.

But in Sinai there is nothing to interfere with its one great event. "The Exodus is the one only stream of history that has passed through this wonderful region: a history which has for its background the whole magnificence of Egypt, and for its distant horizon the forms, as yet unborn, of Judaism, Mahometanism, and Christianity."

The peninsula of Sinai is bounded on the west and east by the gulfs of Suez and Akaba, down the former of which pours the great stream of Anglo-Indian traffic; while the other, on whose bosom now hardly a solitary fisherman casts his net, was of old whitened by the fleets of Solomon and Jehosaphat.

The centre of this triangular tongue of land is occupied by the great limestone desert of the Zih, intersected by low ranges of barren hills. To the south and separated from the Zih by a strip of sand, tower the red and awful heights of Horeb, the mountain of God.

The mountainous range strikes the observer with awe and admiration; as he enters its narrow defiles the stillness is terrible, while on either side tower red and purple cliffs of granite and sandstone.

The whole range looks, as Sir F. Henniker says, "as if it were an ocean of lava, which, while its waves were running mountains high, had suddenly stood still." The same traveller referring to the almost entire absence of vegetation, has called them the "Alps unclothed."

Between the mountains run long narrow valleys called Wadys, which seem like the beds of dried-up rivers; here and there a small stream runs through the most favoured of them, or a spring creates a luxuriant vege-

tation of grass and palms, the more delightful from the contrast with the terrible sterility around. Such is the Wady Ferain (probably the Rephidim), where first the Israelites encountered a foe after the crossing of the Red Sea.

Into this awful and silent temple, not made with hands, the Almighty led the Israelites, that by the spectacle of the mighty works of God, beside which the Egyptian temples and pyramids were toys—they might free their minds from superstitious dread of the gods of the land of their bondage.

On the sides of Sinai are still found those trees and shrubs mentioned in Exodus, as used in the construction of the tabernacle and its various ceremonies. The wild acacia, under the name of sint, everywhere represents the "seneh" of the burning bush. A slightly different form of the tree equally common, under the name of "sayal," is the ancient "shittah;" or, as more usually expressed in the plural (from the tangled thickets into which the stem expands), the "shittem," of which the tabernacle was made; an incidental proof, it may be observed, of the antiquity of the institution, inasmuch as the acacia, though the chief growth of the desert, is very rare in Palestine. The "asef," the bright green creeper which climbs out of the fissures of the rocks in the Sinaitic valleys, has been identified, on grounds of great probability, with the hyssop of Scripture; and this explains whence came the green branches, used even in the desert, for sprinkling the water over the tents of the Israelites.

It has been a common saying of sceptics that the awful voice and thunderings in the mount were but traditionary memorials of great volcanic changes, but a geological inspection of the mountains clearly proves that "the traces of the action of fire on the granite rocks belong to their first upheaving, not to any subsequent convulsions. Everywhere there are signs of the action of water, nowhere of fire."

When 600,000 full-grown Israelites passed through these valleys, it seems probable that they were much more fertile than at present; it is with difficulty that the 6,000 Bedouins who form the inhabitants of the peninsula, support their flocks and herds upon the scanty vegetation, and to supply cattle as numerous as those of the Israelites, by any means not directly miraculous, would be impossible.

All the observations of recent travellers confirm the fact that even within the memory of man valleys have been almost denuded of trees and grass, partly by the action of the winter torrents, but more commonly by the carelessness of Bedouins, and the wanton destruction of trees and shrubs of every kind to supply charcoal for Egypt. There is evidence of a greater population in former times; the Amalekites were something more than a mere handful of Bedouin Arabs; they must have been a numerous and powerful nation.

The identification of the true Mount Sinai is difficult.

Some have believed that Mount Serbal, on the western side of the range, has the best claim. The monks of the time of Justinian fixed on what they have called Gebel Mousa, the Mountain of Moses; but this, though a magnificent and awful rock, has no plain of sufficient extent at its base where the countless host of Israel might have encamped.

At the northern extremity of the same group of rocks is a peak called Ras Sasáfeh, a cliff so majestic, and at whose base there is so wide a plain formed by the meeting of two valleys, that it strikes the traveller who

examines it by the light of the sacred narrative, as of all places on earth the most fitting for the communion of the great God with men. The awful and lengthened approach through the long winding valley of Es Sheykh, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene; while the low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff, exactly answers to the bounds which were to keep the people off from touching the mount.

The plain itself is not broken and uneven, and narrowly shut in like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could "remove and stand afar off." "The cliff itself, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of the mount that could be touched." There are two other points which meet here, and nowhere else. First, Moses is described as descending the mountain without seeing the people; the shout strikes the ear of his companion before they ascertain the cause; the view bursts upon him suddenly as he draws nigh to the camp, and he throws down the tables and dashes them in pieces "beneath" the mount. Such a combination of circumstances might occur here.

Any one coming down from one of the secluded basins behind the Ras Sasâfeh, through the gullies which flank it on the north and south, would hear the sounds home through the silence from the plain, but would not see the plain itself till he emerged from the Wadys; and when he did so, he would be immediately under the precipitous cliffs of Sasâfeh.

Further, we are told that Moses strewed the fragments of the idol on the waters of the brook that came down from the mount. This would be perfectly possible in the Wady el Ruheh (at the foot of Sasâfeh) into which issues the brook of the Wady Lijâ.*

The Convent of St. Catherine is a welcome sight to the traveller; in the midst of the surrounding desert its gardens are blooming luxuriantly. Removed from Christian neighbours, in the midst of a Mahometan and semi-barbarous people, it is cheering to behold the cross on the mountains, even though no longer the symbol of a pure Christianity.

Of course, the monks have made every remarkable spot the scene of some strange circumstance not always supported by Holy Writ. But it is sufficient to know that the mountains on every side are all witnesses to these momentous scenes.

Here Elijah, driven by persecution, heard the strong wind that rent the mountains, and the earthquake, and the still small voice, and at the entrance of some of these caves, with his face wrapped in his mantle, he stood and heard the word of the Lord.

There is another person about whom we Christians feel a deep interest; who, in the New Testament is almost as conspicuous as Moses in the Old—the apostle Paul, who, as we learn from Gal. i. 17, went into Arabia. Is it altogether fanciful to imagine that the visions he saw, and the unutterable things he heard, when caught up to the third heaven, were seen and heard amid the sacred recesses of Sinai?

As the traveller pursues the route of the Israelites to Canaan, he comes in sight of Mount Hor, on whose summit Aaron breathed his last, and transferred his high-priestly functions to another.

In the recesses of this mountain lies Petra, the city of the rocks, one of the strongest remains of antiquity.

The road from the east passes along a narrow winding valley, formed by the splitting asunder of the rocks. On either side these rocks are of a hue that has been described as bright purple, scarlet, and blue, according to the impression of each traveller.

Mr. Stanley reduces these flaming tints to dull crimson, indigo, and yellow; nevertheless, when the bright sun strikes on them, they must have a gorgeous appearance.

Petra has been often described, and Mr. Stanley describes it well; but it has yet to be thoroughly explored and examined before a satisfactory account can be given of the strange architectural remains of various ages and nations.

We have followed our traveller to the verge of the Promised Land. To his interesting pages we may again recur, and trace with him the hills and valleys of Judah, and "walk about Zion," and tell the ruins of her palaces. Meanwhile, we would cordially commend his volume to all who desire a thorough digest of a mass of information scattered through the pages of many preceding travellers.

TREES : THEIR NATURE, GROWTH, AND LONGEVITY.

"THE winter is gone, and spring is come again. The sun 'like a giant refreshed with sleep,' is again putting forth his strength; and under his influence, as the instrument of Him who made and still upholdeth all things, 'the earth is again rising as from her grave into life and beauty.' What season more fitting to take up our favourite subject—the trees, and to pursue those speculations regarding their natural longevity and size, and likewise regarding their real nature, which have so often, in the field and by the fireside, formed the subject of our casual conversation? The buds on many sorts of trees are already swelling, and the sap in the immediate vicinity of the buds is already in motion, to be followed, ere long, and in quick succession, by the evolution in leaf and flower, and fruit, and wood and root, and by a perfect circulation of nutrient fluid in all the living and growing parts; and all this to be succeeded before the year has run its course, by the falling of the leaf, the dropping of the fruit, and the cessation of all vital action in what remains. Taking up the subject now, ere yet the annual process of vegetation is well begun, and following this process through its several stages, we may have it in our power in the course of the season to make for ourselves observations enough, and experiments enough to satisfy us whether our speculations be true to nature and to fact."

It is in these pleasant sentences that Dr. Harvey of Southampton commences a series of interesting and highly instructive letters to his sons, lately published, on the "Nature, Growth, and Longevity of Trees."* The

* Trees and their Nature; or, the Bud and its Attributes. In a Series of Letters to his Sons. By Alexander Harvey, A.M., M.D., Member of the Medical Society of Southampton, etc., etc. Illustrated with Engravings. London: James Nisbet & Co., 21, Berners Street. 1856.

return of April to us, with its buds and blossoms, makes such a subject of speculation seasonable; and as trees, whether in the garden, the field, or the forest, are universal favourites, we do not doubt that our readers will be obliged to us for bringing before them some of the views held respecting them by one who has loved them much, and studied them long with the observant eye of a genial naturalist, and the profound reflection of a true philosopher.

The common and almost universally held notion of a tree is stated by Dr. Harvey, thus—

“The common notion of a tree is that it is an *individual*, in the same sense that a dog or a horse is; and it certainly appears to be such. It is assumed that the trunk and roots, and branches, the leaves and flowers, and fruit and buds, which form component parts of every tree, go to make up one and the self-same plant, in like manner as the bones and flesh, the nerves and bloodvessels, the heart and lungs, the head and trunk and limbs of a dog, do truly form the parts of one and the self-same individual animal. Doubtless, that is the common belief. A tree is regarded as having the same sort of individuality or personality that you or I have.”

Dr. Harvey's own notion of a tree is very different from this:—

“In my view it is not an individual in the proper or scientific sense of the term, but, on the contrary, a *body corporate*. Take an oak at Midsummer, in full leaf, and in its full vigour. It is neither more nor less than a collection, an aggregate, a corporation of living and growing but separate and distinct oak plants, the production of the current year, and likewise of the *dead remains* of a still larger number of individual plants of the same kind or species, the production of a series of by-gone years. And of these oak plants, each and every one lives only *one* year, and attains its *full* growth within the year; making provision in the form of buds for the evolution of similar plants the following year. Further, the plants of each year, shooting up in spring from the buds formed by the plants of the previous year, *grow parasitically* on the persistent dead remains of these. Acquiring their maturity in summer, and reaching to the height of a few inches only, they pass into the state of old age (the sere and yellow leaf) and eventually *die* in autumn, save only the buds they have formed, which survive the winter. And thus dying, the greater part of every one of them speedily undergoes decomposition and disappears. The woody stems and roots alone remain. These, although dead, escape that process. Tipped with the living buds they abide entire—as entire, yet as destitute of vitality, as the table I am writing at; and they abide to serve to these buds and to the young oak plants that are to come of them next year (as the earth does to the acorns and their produce), the purposes both of a *temporary soil* and of a permanent *mechanical support*. Such is my apprehension of a tree. A tree is an aggregate of *annual* and comparatively *small-sized* and *slender* plants, the propagation of which, from year to year, is effectually provided for by buds; and the accumulation of which *en masse*, by the living growing as *parasites* on the dead, necessarily keeps pace with the annual succession of plants.”

All this seems strange and paradoxical enough, but the consequences of such a theory of trees appear much more strange and paradoxical still.

“Regarding the tree in this light,” continues our author, “I hold that but for *accidental* causes, any and every tree might live for ever, and go on growing and enlarging to any conceivable size. You have heard it said that the king of England never dies; and you will readily understand that what is not true of individual men may yet be true of individual families, or of the race in general. Individuals die, but

the race lives and multiplies.* The corporation of London has lasted, we may say has lived, some hundreds of years; and unless swept away by some such extraneous cause as an act of the legislature, may last till the end of time, though the individuals composing it may none of them pass the allotted three-score years and ten. Just so in respect of a tree. If what I have stated be a true account of its nature, and of the manner of its production, it will of course follow that a tree is an individual in precisely the same sense as a body corporate; and that, contrary indeed to the common opinion, but in perfect consistency with the principle that all living beings are subject to the law of mortality, and have a definite size or bulk of organism, there will be no limit except from *extraneous* causes, to the size it may attain, or the number of years it may live. What is called a *genealogical tree* is constructed very exactly on the principle of this theory, and serves extremely well so far to make it intelligible; while the personality of each member of the tree is admitted, and his own individual *temporary* existence, he is yet regarded as forming a scion or branch of one *common stock*, which may have had its origin in a remote age, and may endure as *long* as the world itself."

Here, then, are questions raised of great scientific interest and difficulty, and which can only be settled by the most profound and comprehensive study of the principles of vegetable physiology, and the observed facts of the vegetable kingdom. We cannot, of course, in this place, follow Dr. Harvey into the details of the scientific investigations and reasonings into which he enters in support of his favourite theory; nor in questions of abstruse science, on which the greatest masters of physiology are still divided, will we be so bold as to pronounce an opinion either way. But we may, at least, express our sense of the truly philosophic spirit and tone in which he conducts his argument, in which we recognise the genuine temper of the Baconian school; and we cannot withhold our admiration of the enthusiastic ardour with which he has collected relevant facts and observations from all quarters, and of the acuteness and ability with which he applies them to the support of his views, and to the solution of difficulties and objections raised against those views by other physiologists.

The inferences which Dr. Harvey himself deduces from his theory, viz., that there is no natural limit prescribed by the inherent physiology of the tree, either to its size or longevity, will probably appear to most people to be a sufficient *prima facie* argument against its truth; and as this branch of the subject admits of easy and popular treatment, we may here give a few more paragraphs from the author, both for their inherent interest, and as a sample of his matter and manner as a scientific writer. He meets the natural incredulity with which his views respecting the indefinite growth and longevity of trees are sure to be met, by adducing many actual examples of trees of enormous size and age, which are irreconcilable with the opposite theory of a fixed and invariable law of growth and longevity.

"Of old trees still extant in this country, and still living and growing, we need not look beyond the yew tribe. There are, indeed, oaks, limes, sycamores, chesnuts, ashes, and others of great antiquity and vast size, some of them coeval with the Conquest, some of them probably much older still; but they all sink into insignificance before the yews. Of these, there are some at Fountain's Abbey, near Ripon, in Yorkshire, which are believed to be more than 1,200 years old; there are two in the churchyard of Crowhurst, in Surrey, 1,450; and one at Fortingall, in Perthshire, from 2,500 to 2,600 years

* Hæc Naturæ lèx, hoc consilium, ut singuli pereant homines, gens humana floreat.

old. One in Brabourn churchyard, in Kent, is said to have attained the age of 3,000 years; and another at Hedsor, in Bucks, which is still in full vigour, and measures above twenty-seven feet in diameter, is reckoned to be above 3,200 years old. . . . In the Brazils, in one of the primæval forests, there are some trees supposed to be *Courbarils*, which in respect of size are truly colossal, and in respect of age have been variously computed at from 2,000 to 4,000 years. 'Never before,' says Martius, 'had I beheld such enormous trunks. They looked more like living rocks than trees; for it was only on the pinnacle of their bare and naked bark that foliage could be discovered, and that at such a distance from the eye that the form of the leaves could not be made out. Fifteen Indians, with outstretched arms, could only just embrace one of them. At the bottom they were eighty-four feet in circumference and sixty feet where the boles became cylindrical. . . . Then there is the famous *Boobab* growing in Senegal, and supposed to be the oldest kind of tree in any part of the world. The trunk of this extraordinary tree does not attain a height much exceeding fifteen feet, but in some instances it is from eighty to ninety feet in girth: and according to the estimate of Adanson, founded on a comparison of Thevet's account of one seen by the latter in the year 1555, with his own measurement of the same tree, two hundred years later, the trees that are twenty-seven feet in diameter, have an age of 4,280 years; some of them have a diameter of thirty feet, and these are supposed to have attained an age little short of 6,000 years. Coeval, probably, with the *Boobab*, is the Gum-Dracón tree (*Dracæna Draco*), which furnishes the astringent resin called dragon's blood, once used in medicine, but now chiefly by painters, as a red varnish. One growing in its native island, Teneriffe, is described by Humboldt as the "gigantic tree of Orotava"—centuries ago an object of veneration to the Guanchos, the aborigines of Teneriffe. A little above ground it measures forty-five feet in circumference, a girth, indeed, which, vast as it is, comes far short of that of the *boobab*. The tree, however, seems to be of exceedingly slow growth, so much so, that, according to the traditions of it which have been handed down, it was as large and hollow 450 years ago as it is now. Sir William Hooker observes, regarding it, that it is of "incalculable age." "Doubtless it and the *boobab*," he adds, "are among the oldest vegetable inhabitants of our planet. . . . The *Taxodium Distichum* (or deciduous cypress) seems to be the most gigantic of any on record, and to be second to none in age. Two existing specimens may be referred to—one in the churchyard of Santa Maria de Telsa, near Oaxaca in Mexico, which has a trunk ninety-three feet in girth; the other, that of Chapultepec, which is said to have a circumference of 117 feet 10 inches. Regarded as of 'wondrous' magnitude by the Spanish conquerors, this tree of Chapultepec '*certainly reaches back*' (according to De Candolle) '*to the origin of the present state of the world—an epoch of which*' (in his view) '*it is the most indisputable monument.*' Professor Henslow, it may be observed, estimates the longevity of the *taxodium* at above 4,000 years. . . . Let these examples suffice. Enough appears from them to show that trees may attain to an age altogether wonderful, and to a size that is quite prodigious, and still continue to live and grow."

But the popular objection to Dr. Harvey's theory may take another shape. Why, it may be asked, upon the principles of that theory, should examples of trees of enormous size not be extremely common? And had our space permitted, we would gladly have added to the above extracts a series of highly interesting paragraphs, in which Dr. Harvey very satisfactorily meets this objection and disposes of it. We can only find room for a few of the leading sentences:—

"All trees, and some kinds more than others, are subject to certain influences from without, and to a certain change from within, which, unfailingly entail not the *natural*

decline and death, but the *accidental destruction* of the far greater number of them, and that before the lapse of any very lengthened period."—"In old trees of the *Exogenous* kind, the internal and more recently formed layers of bark are prevented from yielding by the drying and hardening of the older layers of bark without; while the inner and older wood loses its porosity, partly by the pressure of the younger wood without, and partly from deposits (*crystalline?*) of organic matter in its substance. And thus it happens that neither can the roots of the growing plants (the annual shoots and leaves) readily find room to grow, nor can the sap rise freely upwards. In *Endogens* the trunk becomes at length so disproportional in height to the naturally narrow basis of sustentation under ground, as to be easily blown down. And even in *Exogens*, proportionally broad as this basis is, the vast height and breadth of surface which they at length acquire, cause the wind to act on them to their destruction, the older they become, at an advantage infinitely greater than in their earlier years. . . . Further, all dead organic matter' (such as Dr. H. maintains all the parts of a tree, except the year's growth, to be) 'sooner or later undergoes certain purely chemical changes, which lead to its decay and decomposition, and end in its disappearance; and this process once begun goes on all the more rapidly that the conditions favourable to it obtain. . . . Moreover, the nourishment existing in the soil comes often to be exhausted, and even that supplied by the atmosphere, to be rendered unavailable. . . . Add to the agency of the causes already specified, that of a thousand other destructive influences, frost, fire, hurricanes, lightning, the necessities and caprices of man himself; and a calculation of chances will put it beyond all doubt, that the far greater number of all sorts of trees, perennial as the everlasting hills, as I maintain they naturally are, must perish at no very remote period from their origin; and that ultimately, though at no definite time, even the oldest and the greatest of them must disappear from off the face of the earth."

The view, given in these letters, of the nature of trees, differs widely from that commonly received among us. It neither represents the popular belief, nor does it accord with the recognised doctrines of the schools. "To the popular mind, indeed," to use Dr. H.'s own words, "it may be said to be nearly unknown, while heretofore it has failed to secure the sanction of the greater number of our scientific botanists. In the main, however, it is the same as that first set forth by De la Hire, as long ago as 1708, and subsequently held by Darwin, Mirbel, Du Petit-Thouars, Gaudichaud, and other physiologists;" and since the publication of this volume, Dr. Harvey has ascertained that the views of the eminent French physiologist, De Candolle, as set forth in his "*Physiologie Végétale*," published in 1832, are substantially accordant with his own. He disclaims, therefore, "all pretensions on the score of originality. He has advanced nothing that was not known or held before. The only merit he is disposed to claim in connection with it, is that of having unfolded it more systematically, and in greater detail than any of his predecessors." At the same time, it is no more than justice to Dr. Harvey to state that the theory was worked out by him, substantially as it now appears, without any assistance from others; that it was embodied in a course of lectures on physiology, which he delivered in Marischal College, Aberdeen, during the winter session of 1844, and that it was subsequently more largely developed in a paper "*On the Nature, Longevity, and Size of Trees*," which he published in the "*Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*," for January, 1847, long before he had any knowledge of the writings of De la Hire, Darwin, Mirbel, Gaudichaud, and De Candolle.

We have only room to add that Dr. Harvey studies and expounds his

favourite subject, not only with the broad and acute intellect of a philosopher, but with the devout and reverential spirit of a Christian. He has an open eye for the manifestation of God in the book of nature; and he has a fine gift for discovering and appreciating the beautiful analogies which bind together the volumes of nature and revelation—the Old Testament and the New of God's Universal Bible. To him, the Trees of the field and the forest are "*The Trees of the Lord*," and the Cedars of Lebanon are the Cedars which "*He hath planted*." Such a man and such a writer is a distinguished ornament to the eldership of our Church; and this ingenious and truly original work will find its way, we doubt not, to the hands of many of our ministers, elders, and people, who, while thankful to see examples of the combination of genius and piety appearing in *any* and *every* branch of the Church of Christ, are sensible of a special obligation to appreciate and encourage them, when they shew themselves in their own.

MINISTERIAL MENDICANCY.

You wish my advice as to your proposed begging expedition to clear away the debt on your church. Your question has sent back my thoughts to some old experiences of my own in the same matter. I was a more sanguine and a younger man then. The mission I undertook was not on behalf of my own church, but of a distant one in which I felt an interest, and the importance of which gave it, I thought, strong claims upon the friends of the church. I was not much in love with the work I had undertaken, and yet I fancied that the obvious generosity of my errand in pleading the cause of so important and necessitous a church, with which I had no more connection than any other member of our body, would secure for me a kindly welcome, perhaps an ample response. I am bound to say I met with many large-hearted and liberal men; some who aided me freely, others who were unable to do so only because the very largeness of their benefactions in other directions had too much drained the resources of their charity. I confess, however, that even in the case of some who gave most largely, I was not without some compunction in accepting the gift, because it was evident that the spontaneous impulses of benevolence would have sent forth the same streams to water other arid places. I felt that such donors would have given as much, more cheerfully, and perhaps with a finer exercise of heart, because spontaneously, if I had not been obliged to constrain them with the claim I carried.

Of course I met with men of another class, who had no great love for giving at all. I found it a matter of extreme difficulty to show them what conceivable claim the church of —— could have upon *them*. True, I had in every instance sent before me a circular plainly stating the facts, which spoke for themselves more eloquently than I could do, and explaining that I went on my mission with the full sanction of my Presbytery. But what avail your circulars if men will not read them? In four cases out of five, on the most moderate calculation, the circular was unread.

I had sundry painful experiences; sometimes I had to stand in a back

office or a back shop, waiting till the principal was at leisure to give me a refusal in person. Frequently I visited the same office five or six times, Mr. So-and-so being either engaged or out. I saw that every matter of petty secularity was to take precedence of my work—that is, my Master's work. In one instance I remember to have driven six miles out of town to find that the gentleman I was in search of had removed from that neighbourhood some time ago. In short, in a day or two the chivalrous emotions with which I had entered on my mission were very much subdued. I felt that I had incurred a sudden but most obvious unpopularity. I remember to have met in the street an old friend whom I had seen rarely for some years. He always used to be delighted to see me, and rejoiced in a talk over old times, being a man of ample leisure. But on this occasion there was a look of positive pain upon his face, and hardly shaking hands with me, he fled as if he had seen the genius of the plague looking over my shoulder. I gave him not the most delicate hint of the cause of my visit to town, but he had scented my object and he was off. From that moment I began to see how I and my mission were looked upon; and I walked on with something of the feelings of a sweep who knows that his sooty calling will make his friends give him a wide berth.

I could run through a long series of such reminiscences, but these may serve to let you know what you have to expect if you start on your proposed begging tour. Only that, going on your own account, you would find all the evils I met with multiplied and aggravated. Two or three lessons I learned at that time, and I wish the church would learn them too.

First of all, this kind of promiscuous "begging," even for an excellent and necessitous object, is degrading to the minister engaged in it, and, in a measure, to the ministry itself. I would distinguish here between pleading for a *cause* and for a *case*. But, anyhow, the collecting of funds by personal solicitation should not fall upon ministers. Let them freely and fearlessly proclaim the gospel duty and privilege of giving, but let other hands be held out to receive the offerings of the people.

Further, the system of which I speak, and which has grown to so formidable an extent since I made my first and last essay, is fitted not only to be lowering to the ministry, but also to be injurious to the laity. They are plagued, perhaps even irritated, by continual interruptions of this kind while they are engaged in business, and often they pay an unwilling guinea rather to get rid of a troublesome solicitor, than from interest in the cause he pleads. In some instances, where such cases are very frequent, the less stable members of our church become actually alienated, and not unprepared, in case of a change of residence, quietly to give in their adhesion to some less tormented church. Almost all that is got in this way is got from a certain limited range of givers. The field to which any man goes to beg, he may rest assured, has been not only reaped, but gleaned already. One has not, therefore, even the satisfaction of thinking that this plan of pressure calls forth gifts from the hard and unwilling. It does no such thing; those that give *thus* are men for the most part that would give otherwise.

What, then, is to be done? I confess it is not easy to say. But this seems to me plain, that if such work must be done, laymen ought to do it. It is not ministers' work at all. If "begging" is not "serving tables," I don't know what is. It is lowering to the status, injurious to

the spirituality, and sometimes fatal to the highest hopes of the minister who engages in it. I have recently felt grieved because of some young ministers who, in the sincerity of their hearts, choose the holy office from love of the gospel and of souls. In a year or two they have to travel up and down the country raising funds to build their church or to liquidate its debt. I have known such a youth return to his sphere more than half heart-broken. His energies and time, instead of being devoted to the labours of the study and the pastorate, are squandered upon these secularities. His spirit fails; it was never for such work he chose his profession, and perhaps his congregation fail him too, not considering that it is impossible to spend himself wholly upon the secularities of the church, and yet have all his powers at command for its spiritualities. Just as in the storming of some cities it has been matter of necessity that the trench should be filled with the fallen bodies of the foremost ranks that the army might march over them; so have we been too willing in certain cases to let the pioneer fall in the bootless effort at once to serve tables and to feed the flock, that over his prostrate form a successor might stride on to usefulness and success.

Are there none of the noble-hearted laymen in your church that will take up this matter? Can a lay committee not be formed at once to raise and to dispense a supplemental fund for necessitous cases, and this to the entire exclusion of ministerial mendicancy? Would not the givers in the church be willing to give the average of their miscellaneous givings for the last three years into such a fund? Some, I believe, would gladly double the amount to secure the absence of such solicitations, and the wise dispensing of their charities. Your Synod is about to meet; will it do nothing to meet this claimant evil?

Meantime, my young friend, don't go a-begging. If I were you, I would try my hand at breaking stones first.

Miscellaneous Papers.

(Original and Selected.)

THE COLLEGE.

THESE two questions, the position of the College, and Church extension, if the Presbyterian Church would accomplish her mission in England, must speedily be considered and promptly settled. They ought to be discussed, and we hope they will at the meeting of Synod in April.

The right settlement of these two questions—1. How many Professors ought to be appointed to our College, and how is their permanent support to be provided for? And—2. How shall Church extension be most wisely and vigorously prosecuted?—is all important.

There are other matters of some moment demanding adjustment to the right shape and true position of our Church; these are essential and vital to her stability and progress. The hymn-book and organ controversies can wait—these require instant arrangement; and in seeking their right settlement we must not look merely to existing circumstances or our more pressing wants. We must look well a-head—calmly consider and calculate for what is likely to be, as well as what actually is.

It cannot reasonably be questioned that the permanent interests and stability of

every Protestant Church very materially depend on the encouragement given to sacred learning within her pale—that the success with which sacred literature is cultivated, mainly depends on the provision which the Church makes for the instruction of her students, and that the scantiest possible apparatus for conducting the work necessary to the theological education and training of her aspirants to the ministry, is a Divinity Hall with *three* professors. We have not made this scantiest provision; we have *two* professors, assisted and supplemented by two London ministers, who cannot be expected, immersed as they are in all the anxieties and labours of ministerial duty, to devote much time to professorial work, nor long to give even that small portion they have hitherto been able to afford. This is not as it should be. Two professors cannot teach as they ought to be taught Exegesis, Apologetics, Systematic Theology, Church History, Hebrew, and Greek. It is monstrous to expect any two men to undertake such an amount of labour. It is utterly impossible that any two men can satisfactorily undertake it. Some branch of theological learning must be neglected. Our *two* professors are second to none in any theological hall, in mental vigour, literary acquirements, earnest piety, and in that energy, enthusiasm, and love for their subjects, so absolutely necessary to evoke sympathy with and love for them, and to impress the minds of students; but they cannot do impossibilities. Just as long as they are left to do the work, which to be done efficiently requires three or four professors, will our College be stigmatised as a sham—the mere mockery of a theological hall; and the story of the elder Boswell about “a schule,” and “an acaademy” will be sneeringly applied to it, and we must confess, with some show of reason.

To place our College in a right position—to make it what it professes to be—to do justice to our present professors, students, and congregations, one other professor, at least, must be appointed by the Synod in April.

But how is their permanent support to be provided for? “Aye, there’s the rub!” Have another professor by all means, every

one answers; but first of all see to it that an adequate salary is provided for him. How, then, is this to be done? By annual collections? by sending an agent through the length and breadth of the Church with a piteous tale of starving professors and an empty exchequer? Not at all. Endow our College. Endowed it must be if we would insure its pre-eminence. You cannot evoke sufficient sympathy in the great mass of the people for a theological school to insure an annual collection large enough for its support. The annual collection will still be needed for mere incidental expenses. By the way, while our present arrangements continue—while our professors are mainly dependent on this annual collection for their promised support, we hope that not many ministers will tell their congregations that they need not give very much for the support of the College. We are credibly informed that the minister of one of our wealthiest and most influential congregations made some such intimation to his people when announcing a College collection. How should such conduct be characterised? The endowment of our College is the ideal of the right and the good in our circumstances. How much soever some may laugh at it as “a devout imagination”—we believe it practicable. The Free Church of Scotland has one college with four professors, fully endowed; another with three professors, two of whom have permanent stipends attached to their chairs, and a third with five professors. If the Free Church of Scotland, after building churches, manses, and schools—after erecting three colleges at a cost of not less than £50,000, could afford to endow six out of her eleven professorships, surely the Presbyterian Church in England might endow *three*. There is, we are persuaded, no want of money, nor of willingness. It requires only to be fairly discussed, deliberately resolved on, to be done. The wealthier members of our Church would liberally respond to a call for such an object.

The question of Church extension is intimately connected with that of the College. If the services of some of our present students are to be retained to the Church in England, the field of her labours must be widely extended—and it ought to

be. It is a shame and disgrace to Presbyterianism that our Church does not provide Gospel ordinances for all those at least who hold by her standards. She ought to assume a more aggressive character, fairly and fearlessly expound her principles, and openly declare that her mission is to preach the Gospel, and gather within her pale, not only the Irish and Scotch Presbyterians, who have come to England to seek the fortune their own countries deny them—but to the people of England, whom she can persuade that her government, and worship, and teaching, are scriptural.

The very least that should be done for the College at next meeting of Synod is

to appoint another professor, and to take measures to provide permanent endowment for all the chairs. This is the very least. It occurs to us that something more is required—viz., to remove our Theological Hall to Oxford or Cambridge, and along with it establish a Presbyterian College, at which all Presbyterians from England, Scotland, and Ireland, who aspire to the highest honours in the state, might be educated. Unless this be done we shall lose the sons of our wealthy commercial class, as we have already our aristocracy. On this large question we cannot enter at present. In some future number we may return to it.

LETTER TO A UNITARIAN.

MY DEAR SIR,—In the course of our conversation on the subject of Unitarianism, you used an argument, or rather started a difficulty, which I certainly did not expect to hear from you. On this let me now say a few words by way of supplement to my previous communication.

Your objection is a very old one, and one that has been so often refuted that, in my simplicity, I had imagined few at all acquainted with theological writings, would, at this time of the day, venture to make use of it. You referred to the ungodliness of many professing Christians, which you seemed to attribute to the doctrines of grace; indeed, your impression seemed to be, that nothing else was to be expected from men who believed they could only be saved by faith and not by works. Now, it is needless formally to answer this objection. You knew as well as I that there are false as well as true professors of Christianity; and I must say that it is ungenerous and unjust in the extreme to hold the truth responsible for the sins of those who do not believe it. To use an old illustration, you might as well assert that there is no such thing as gold in the Mint, because now and again you happen to receive a bad sovereign.*

But let me direct your attention to the capital defect of your creed—a defect which springs from its essential doctrine, the denial of the divinity of our Lord, and we will then see which occupies the vantage ground as to morality or good works. Your system, as a system of morals, is pure and perfect, as far as it is derived from the Scriptures. But it wants a *motive force* . It is an engine constructed with all the ingenuity of a master. The only thing wanting is the *steam* to make it work. Now we have the same perfect code and perfect example as you have, but we have something more. We have a motive force sufficiently powerful to animate to obedience. In truth, this is the *characteristic* of Christianity. You differ from the heathen moralists merely in this—that you have a more perfect code, inasmuch as you have the New Testament, which they had not. But you have little more than they had to animate to obedience. And hence, we assert again, that Unitarian-

Their past history, as a sect, gives no indications of special uprightness. We need only mention their possession of the chapels and endowments of the old English Presbyterians. But we hope that their conduct, in this respect, will continue to be so exposed, that the very word "Presbyterian" will call up such a host of disagreeable associations, that they will be glad to leave the designation to those who alone are entitled to it.

* The English Unitarians ought to be the last to assume the Pharisaic tone—"Stand by, for I am holier than thou."

ism is Deism baptized, or rather, *christened*, and nothing more.

Now, it is here that Christianity stands so far apart from all systems—in that it brings to bear upon the spring of human action such a force as overpowers opposition and produces a steady obedience. To this your system can make no pretensions; and hence it is barren of all results, and, were your sect blotted out of the denominational map of the world to-morrow, we should not in the least be conscious of a void. But on the other hand—“Who is he,” asks the apostle John, “that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”* And why should the belief that Jesus is the Son of God exercise such a mighty influence? Because, “This is he that came by water and blood.” That is to say, the “blood which cleanseth from all sin” puts him who believes into the right *position*, makes him free, delivers him from the guilt and the condemnation due to his sins, and this gives him confidence towards God; and this “water” by which he came, or the Holy Spirit, becomes his also, and thus he not only occupies the only position which renders obedience possible, but he also possesses the *means*—that which delivers him from the power of sin, and gives him the will to obey.

I will not further enter into this profound subject. Allow me to conclude by quoting the following beautiful sentiments attributed to Napoleon, as they contain some vivid and truthful glimpses of what we have alluded to as the characteristic of Christianity:—

“How should a man, the particulars of whose history are better attested than that of any of his contemporaries—how should he alone, the son of a carpenter, give out all at once that he was God, the Creator of all things? He arrogates to himself the highest adoration. He constructs his worship with his own hands; not with stones, but with men. You are amazed at the conquests of Alexander; but here is a conqueror who appropriates to his own advantage, who incorporates with himself, not a nation but the human race. Wonderful! the human soul with all its faculties becomes blended with the

existence of Christ. And how? By a prodigy surpassing all other prodigies, he seeks the love of man, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain; he seeks what a wise man would fain have from a few friends, a father from his children, a wife from a husband, a brother from a brother,—in a word, the heart; this he seeks, this he absolutely requires, and he gains his object. Hence I infer his Divinity. Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Louis XIV., with all their genius, failed here. They conquered the world and had not a friend.

“Christ speaks, and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood, by the most sacred, the most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up a flame of love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love.

“The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and beautifully called charity. Hence it is that they have struck upon a rock. In every attempt to effect this thing, namely, to *make himself beloved*, man feels deeply his own importance. So that Christ’s greatest miracle is, undoubtedly, the reign of charity. All who sincerely believe in him taste his wonderful, supernatural, exalted love. The more I think of this I admire it the more; and it convinces me absolutely of the Divinity of Christ.

“I have inspired multitudes with such affection for me, that they would die for me. God forbid that I should compare the soldier’s enthusiasm with Christian charity, which are as unlike as their cause. But, after all, my presence was necessary—the lightning of my eye, my voice, a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do, indeed, possess the secret of this magical power which lifts the soul, but I could never impart it to any one; none of my generals ever learnt it from me, nor have I the secret of perpetuating my name and love for me in the hearts of men, and to effect these things without physical means.

“Now that I am at St. Helena; now that I am alone chained to this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? Where are any to share my misfortune, any to think of me? Who

* 1 John v. 5, 6.

bestirs himself for me in Europe? Who remains faithful to me? Where are my friends? Yes, two or three of you who are immortalised by this fidelity, ye share, ye alleviate my exile. Such is the fate of great men. So it was with Cæsar and Alexander, and I, too, am forgotten, and the name of a conqueror and an empire is a college theme; our exploits are tasks given to pupils by their tutor, who sits in judgment upon us, awarding us censure or praise. Such is soon to be the fate of the great Napoleon. What a wide abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and which is extended over all the earth! Is this death? Is it not life rather? The death of Christ is the death of a God."

THE BLIND BAIRN.

THE wee blind beggar bairnie sits
Close to that woman's feet,
An' there he nestles frae the cauld,
An' shelters frae the heat.
I ken nae if he be her ain,
But kindly does she speak,
For blessed God makes woman love
The helpless an' the weak.

I'm wae to see his wistfu' face,
As, weary day by day,
He cowers sae still an' silent there,
While ither bairnies play.
The sigh that lifts his breastie comes,
Like sad winds frae the sea,
Wi' sic a dreary sough as wad
Bring tears into yer ee.

I'm wae to see his high braid broo,
Sae thochtfu' an' sae wan;
His look o' care, that were mair fit
For a warlt-weary man.
Oh! the dark emptiness within,
Trochts that no rest can know,
An' shapeless vows that vex him,
Wi' their hurrying to an' fro.

An' now she lifts him in her arms,
His wakin' nicht is past,
And round his sma' and wasted form
Her tattered shawl is cast.
His face is buried in her neck,
An' close to her he clings,
For faith an' love has filled his heart,
An' they are blessed things.

She bears him through the bustlin' crowd,
But noo he fears nae harm;
He'll sleep within her bosom too,
To him it's saft and warm.

Oh, her ain weary heart wad close,
In wretchedness an' sin,
But he keeps in't an open door,
For God to enter in.

POEMS BY ISA.

CHINESE PRECEPTS.

RESPECTING THE MIND.—Let not corrupt thoughts arise. Be not over-anxious, not grieved. Envy not those who have, nor despise those who have not. Complain not of Heaven, and blame not men. Think not of old evils, speculate not on distant things.

THE BODY.—Love not beauty without bounds. Be not greatly intoxicated. Stand not in dangerous places. Do not give way to anger. Do not associate with worthless characters. Do not enrage men who love to strike.

HAPPINESS.—Do not abuse the good things of Providence. Do not love extravagance. Be not over-anxious about being completely provided for. Think not of things which are above your station. Do not deteriorate the grain. Do not destroy life.

THINGS IN GENERAL.—Do not neglect the relations and duties of life. Do not practise corrupt things. Do not oppose the commands of your parents or teachers. Do not speak much. Provoke not a guest to anger. Between two parties, do not speak swords here and flatteries there. Do not stir up troubles. Do not cut and carve the poor. Do not deceive and oppress the orphan and widow. Do not wrongfully accuse any one. Do not learn unprofitable things.

WEALTH.—Be not ashamed of bad food and coarse clothing. Do not buy useless things. Be not over-fond of feasts. Do not learn to imitate the rich and great.

WORDS.—Do not talk of men's domestic affairs. Do not tell secrets. Do not conceal the errors of worthless men. Do not injure a person's parents. Do not put a stop to any good affair. Do not bring up other men's concerns (in conversation). Do not laugh at men's appearance. Do not blame a man for the faults of his relatives. Be not fond of ridiculing any one. Do not make up stories to injure men. Be not proud of your wealth. Do not complain of your poverty. Do not speak with a fierce aspect. Do not despise men's poverty. Do not interrupt men in conversation. Do not lie. Do not help and abet others to do iniquity. Do not write corrupt composition. Do not speak of grumbling or licentiousness. Do not say anything that has a beginning but no end.

WORDS OF THE WISE.

OF JESTING.—Harmless mirth is the best cordial against the consumption of the spirits; wherefore jesting is not so unlawful if it trespasseth not in quantity, quality, or season.

It is good to make a jest, but not to make a trade of jesting. The Earl of Leicester, knowing that Queen Elizabeth was much delighted to see a gentleman dance well, brought the master of a dancing school to dance before her. "It is," said the Queen, "his profession, I will not see him." She liked not where it was a master quality, but where it attended on other perfections. The same we say of jesting.

Jest not with the two-edged sword of God's word. Know the whole art is learnt at the first admission, and profane jests will come without calling. If without thy intention and against thy will, by chance-medley thou hittest Scripture in ordinary discourse, yet fly to the city of refuge, and pray God to forgive thee.

Wanton jests make fools laugh and wise men frown. Seeing we are civilised Englishmen, let us not be naked savages in our talk; such rotten speeches are worst in a withered age.

Let not thy jests, like mummy, be made of dead men's flesh. Abuse not any that are departed; for to wrong their memories is to rob their ghosts of their winding sheets.

Scoff not at the natural defects of any which are not in their power to amend. Oh, 'tis cruel to beat a cripple with his own crutches; neither flout any for his profession, if honest, though poor and painful; mock not a cobbler for his black thumbs.

He that relates another man's wicked jest with delight adopts it as his own. Purge them, therefore, from their poison. If the profaneness may be severed from the wit, it is like a lamprey, take out the sting in the back, it will make good meat. But if the staple conceit consists in profaneness, then it is a viper, all poison, and meddle not with it.

He that will lose his friend for a jest deserves to die a beggar by the bargain. Yet some think their conceits like mustard, not good except they bite. We read that all those who were born in England in the year after the beginning of the great mortality, 1349, wanted their four cheek teeth. Such let thy jests be, that they may not grind the credit of thy friend, and make not jests so long till thou becomest one.—*Abridged from Fuller.*

SIN NOT WEAKENED BY OLD AGE.—I know scarce anything that calls for a

more serious consideration from man than this; for still they are apt to persuade themselves that old age will do that for them which, in their present fulness of strength and youth, they have not the reason, not the heart to do for themselves. Whereas the case is directly the reverse; for nothing will grow weak with age, but that which will at length die with age; which sin never does. The longer the blot continues, the deeper it sinks. *Vice, in retreating from the practice of men, retires into their fancy.—South.*

Men are *atheistical* because they are first *vicious*, and question the *truth* of Christianity because they hate the practice of it.—*South.*

Strong passions work wonders, when there is a greater strength of reason to curb them.—*Tucker.*

Growth in grace manifests itself by a simplicity—that is, a greater naturalness of character. There will be more usefulness and less noise; more tenderness of conscience, and less scrupulosity; there will be more peace, more humility; when the full corn is in the ear it bends down because it is full.—*Cecil.*

There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, that a man does not know how to pass his time. It would have been but ill-spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year of his life.—*Cowley.*

PRAYER FOR WISDOM.

OH! thou art the fountain of all truth,
Dwelling in light most glorious and pure,
The fountain of all wisdom; in thy ruth,
And tender pity, bend a listening ear.

Father of mercies! send thy cheering ray,
To guide us in our dark and troubled path.

We wander, doubtful, in a desert way;
Have pity, Lord, deal not with us in wrath.

God of our strength! stretch forth thy powerful hand,

Uphold our footsteps in the ways of life;
On thee our waiting souls would still depend,

For succour in this weary wasting strife.

Oh! may our light be the soft light of heaven,

Not the false glare which only leads astray;

And walking in the light divinely given,
May we attain the realms of endless day.

B.

HOME MISSION, WHAT IS IT?

OUR praying people are looking with interest to the China intelligence just now. "The land of Sinim" is convulsed by war; the mission operations are interrupted. It is a time for thought—for prayer.—But are not too many even of our godly people not looking (as they ought) to our Home Mission?

What is the Home Mission?

Excavation of heathenism.

In Glasgow there are a hundred thousand who ought to be at church, but never enter it. On Sabbath the 15th of March, the prayers and gifts of God's people were solicited by the Free Church for the evangelization of Glasgow. Thirteen stations in various degrees of forwardness, exist there, in connection with the Free Church. Such men as Andrew Bonar and Alexander Cumming, both familiar to the thousand readers of *McCheyne's Life*, have been found ready to cast themselves on the Lord, and go up to His help against the mighty one of hell, who holds these ten myriads of Glasgoweians in his thrall.

Are we doing what we might?

For fifteen years we have had a Home Mission; thrice the time the Free Church Society has existed. Our whole Church has embarked in it, as one of our main schemes. Something has been done.

But has the fifteen years' effort resulted in anything like a *church a-year*? Not certainly of the class we mean. How many scores of English heathens have we, under God, reclaimed?

We need men *specially set apart*; designated publicly, like our China missionaries, in presence of the Synod, for Home Mission labour among England's myriads of heathen. Five millions of English people go nowhere on the Sabbath.

Yes, they go to the public-house, to the haunts of sin, to the dens of Satan.

The Open-air Preaching movement is making progress. But, in addition to it, we need sustained and special effort by men doing nothing else than excavating.

Eminent men are needed. Where are they? In the fulness of Jesus, to be got, thence, by believing prayer.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of The Presbyterian Messenger.

THE COMING SYNOD.

SIR,—Considering what a field of usefulness lies before our Church at present, I do hope, after the loss of so many precious hours of the last Synod, and so much feeling evaporated in endeavouring to prove the use of an Organ to aid our Psalmody, as either anti-Scriptural or anti-Ecclesiastical—the much more vital questions may now take the pre-eminence. How can we best promote a union of all the Presbyterian bodies in England? How can we best serve the cause of a more wide-spread and sound education among the masses? How can we best promote the welfare of our pastors, and free them from much of that pecuniary anxiety from which they should be relieved? How can we provoke a true Missionary spirit among the rising

young men? To say nothing of the national sins of drunkenness and prostitution, calling for prayer and effort from every Christian, to arrest national judgment, and many other matters which must suggest themselves to every reflecting mind.

Yours,

THE ELDER WHO "DECLINED
TO VOTE."

Liverpool, 24th March, 1857.

PSALMODY.

SIR,—I beg to thank you for giving my former remarks on this important subject a place in your last number. If you could spare room for the further following observations thereon, I should feel still further obliged, and I will content myself with making them a sort of running commen-

tary on some portions of the article headed "Hallelujah," in your number for last month. I would premise that all parties who feel an interest in this subject are indebted to the author of that and a previous similar article, for bringing the matter so prominently forward.

"Poetry and music are the great vehicles of praise." The truth of this is verified in many ways, both in the pulpit and in the pew. Those who are capable of reading or reciting poetry with effect, are generally fond of and able to appreciate good music.

"We have the same inspired psalms as were sung in the ancient church." "Of old they were sung in the unmetrical form." There can be no doubt that they are referred to in 1 Chron. xxv., and in 2 Chron. xxix., as being made use of "to give thanks and to praise the Lord;" and I humbly submit that we give reason for others calling us "sour Presbyterians," by our rejecting those lovely chants and anthems which are wedded to the inspired poetry referred to, and which we delight to listen to in other places of worship.

As regards adding to the number of our metrical paraphrases and hymns, I consider it would be far better to learn to sing well what we have already got.

"In Israel of old an *educated* song raised the sacred melodies in worship." For the truth of this statement we have only to refer to the two chapters of 1st and 2nd Chron., to which I have above referred. If we are not to use "stringed instruments and organs," as mentioned in the last of the psalms, we ought to cultivate that best of all musical organs, the human voice. But here arises the great difficulty. Unfortunately this is not considered a part of education, and when people grow up to maturity without having their voices trained to sing "in parts," it is a positive fact (which I have had proved within the last few days, as well as on many previous occasions) that they would prefer the most common, humdrum style of singing, to the assistance of a good choir. It is in music, as in other things, a good taste cannot be forced, with any good effect, on those who have long been accustomed to a vitiated one. Hence the necessity of teaching the young, which are "the Church's hope."

There is no doubt but that this should be more a matter of "*conscience*" than it is. We ought to consider it a *duty* to sing as well as to pray, both being equally pressed upon our notice in the word of God, for while I find in one place the injunction to "pray without ceasing," I find, in another the never-ceasing indications of a grateful heart, leading me to say, "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth." But how

can we "join our cheerful songs with angels round the throne," if we perform our part in an ineffectual, careless manner, or do not learn to sing at all? The laws of harmony are founded in nature, and are true and unalterable; but we have to study and to learn those laws, to appreciate their beauty and to be able to reduce them to practice.

I beg to repeat, what I wrote before, that "it is an anomaly, that whilst we devote" (properly, I, of course, allow) "so much time and attention in our church services to prayer and preaching, which are in due time to be done away with, we give, comparatively speaking, so little room to the exercise of praise, which we are happy in believing is to last for ever."

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
W. SINCLAIR.

ORATORIOS.

SOME time ago we received the following letter from an Islington correspondent:—

SIR,—I think you would be conferring a benefit generally if you would favour the readers of the "Messenger" with your opinion as to the lawfulness and desirableness of Members of Churches and Chapels attending oratorios. I am satisfied that it may be lawfully done, but others are not of that opinion; indeed, it appears to be rather a vexed question, but I think six lines from your pen would put the matter in its proper light.—I am, Sir,

A SUBSCRIBER TO THE SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY, AND A MEMBER OF THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

We have long considered the question raised by our correspondent, a very important one, requiring far more attention from Christians, than it has yet received. For our own part we never attended oratorios, or countenanced them in any shape, because, we believe, that it is neither lawful nor desirable for Christians to do so. We do not consider it necessary *at present* to enter at length into a statement of our reasons for thinking so, because we find them ready for use in the following extract from a letter, which, many years ago, was addressed by a minister to his people. We are prepared to indorse his views entirely and fully, and we submit them to the *prayerful* consideration of our correspondent and all others, whom they may concern.

"Are we authorised to use sacred music upon ordinary occasions, or for secular objects? How far are those fashionable entertainments, called oratorios, sanctioned by the principles of revealed truth, and how far are they deserving of the countenance of Christians? Are they sanctioned at all; are they worthy of countenance at all, on the principles just named?"

I believe not. I conceive that the nature of such compositions places them beyond the range of amusements; and that Scripture, and good taste, and correct feeling, forbid their employment for such a purpose. Let me beg your patient and candid attention to the few remarks I have to make on this point, in which I shall give you the calm unimpassioned expression of my opinion, the result of deliberate reflection, and not the crudities of precipitation, nor the impetuosities of prejudice. I will tell you boldly and plainly what I think of them,—yet gravely and collectedly. I will withhold nothing—"nothing extenuate;" you will therefore expect no mincing and delicate phrases; neither will I "set down aught in malice," so that I shall render justice to those who differ with me in sentiment.

No Christian, I conceive, will dispute my first position,—that it is wrong to make sacred things mere food for entertainment, and that the wrongfulness of doing so bears exact proportion to the sacredness of the object desecrated. Now an oratorio, whether we regard its name or structure, is an address or series of addresses to God, "the greatest and best." It is, if rightly performed, an act of worship. Praise and prayer are the loftiest occupations of created beings. They annihilate infinity, and place the soul in opposition with God. To do that, then, for amusement alone, which, offered from a pure heart, and with correct motives, is the highest homage of the creature to the perfections of the Creator, I cannot but call a gross profanation. Of course, I here reflect chiefly upon the employment of sacred words for such a purpose; because music, properly speaking, can have no sacredness in it, although there is a style of composition to which we may, with conventional propriety, apply the name. It is not, then, to the instru-

mental department of such a performance I now refer, the stateliness of whose march, and gravity of whose tone may comport with the solemn character of the words; but to the making such words the vehicle of conveying to the ear "the concord of sweet sounds" they accompany, the string upon which the rich pearly notes of the music are strung, and which thus play but a subordinate part in the performance.

Now, not in one case out of a thousand in which these performances are exhibited, are the words, the sentiments, the song, the chief attraction. The chief attraction is the music and the skill of the vocalist.

Neither the performers nor the audience pretend that an oratorio is an act of worship,—the grateful homage of reasonable men to the God of their life. To bring down, then, "the high praises of our God," the words of the Holy Spirit, the eternal verities of Scripture, to the level of a sing-song or burletta: to reduce the hallelujahs of the sweet singer of Israel to a mere instrument, upon which some popular artist may display the flexibility and compass of his voice. Oh! this is a use of the sanctities of Scripture, from which every right-thinking, not to say pious mind, must, I conceive, revolt.

But it will be said, are not very solemn and delightful emotions produced in every heart by the performance of the oratorio? Yes; I reply: there are certainly very pleasing emotions produced, and of a very sober, perhaps solemn cast, while you are under the spell of such performances. But there are two very grievous mistakes committed by those who advocate their continuance upon this plea, if, indeed, they be not intended sophisms. The one is, that these feelings are religious.

Now, I contend, that it is not the words but the music which awakens the emotions described, as any one may easily ascertain who is familiar with the music of our best known and most highly-prized oratorios. The man must have ears of felt and a leaden heart who is not overpowered by the thunder of sound which bursts from an orchestra boasting hundreds of performers,—melted by the softness

of some touching melody, and won to admiration by the blended sweetness and skill of the symphony.

But that oratorios owe their effect, in any great degree, to the words, is contradicted further by the rule that prevails in those entertainments which are professedly profane (I use the term simply as notative of a class, and not in an invidious sense). In the opera, who regards the words, except as the accompaniment of the music? Which abide most in memory, the words or the notes of a favourite song? Which affect us most, the numbers of the music, or the rhythm of the poetry? And, finally, which part of the opera is most laboured, because most attractive, popular, and impressive, as most likely to bestow fame and recompense upon the composer, the overture or the airs adapted to words? The overture, undoubtedly, as any one knows who knows anything of music. It is by their overtures our best composers make their deepest impressions, and win their way to wealth and immortality. Now, this rule, I maintain, applies, in all its breadth, to the case in hand. It is to the sweet, solemn, powerful harmonies, and not to the sweetness, solemnity, or power of the language of our oratorios, that we are to trace their influence on their mind. They affect us, not because their themes are grave, and true, and scriptural, but because the measure of the music is mighty and majestic,—mighty as the voice of the storm, and majestic as the march of night.

But the other mistake is, that these feelings are religious. Persons generally, when they hear a sweet and solemn anthem, and are strongly moved thereby, have, as it were, the very depths of their being stirred within them, and give themselves credit straightway for being very devout; whereas it is demonstrable, from the philosophy of sound, to which I simply refer, that the effect upon their frame is purely physical. Certain vibrations have been produced in the air by the boards and strings of the instruments performing; these have produced a corresponding vibration on their organs of sense, and their nature has been affected in consequence in a definite manner,—in a manner which an accurate physiologist can clearly describe

as generally applicable, and which an intimate friend, acquainted with the peculiar temperament of the individual, could find no difficulty of predicting in his particular case.

In this simple statement, without entering into detail or illustration, the whole secret is out,—the riddle read. It is a physical effect, bearing exact relation to the amount of the physical cause. The devotion of the affair becomes purely a question of nervous susceptibility, a devotion that, in the East, would probably dance with the whirling derweeshes as readily as here it melts or glows, adores, or weeps, at the oratorio.

Now, be it borne in mind, that no feeling is religious which has not direct reference to God; which does not spring from a right motive, a heart love for him; is not shaped in its actings by a right rule, respect for his words; and is not aiming for a right end—his glory. Compare with this the religion of the oratorio. People go to it either ignorant of what they are to experience or to renew their past feelings at the entertainment; with no higher object, however, in either case, than mere amusement; and their pleasurable feeling assumes, it may be, a serious and pensive cast (the richest, sweetest shape it can put on), and thus, pleasure their motive, aim, and experience, they can so deceive themselves as to miscall it piety. We surely do such persons no more than justice when we say, they are neither correct philosophers, nor acute analysts, nor scriptural theologians, nor experimental pietists. The motive, the rule, the end, are throughout wrong; therefore the oratorio cannot, in the sense assumed, be by any means the handmaid of true devotion. The subject matter of oratorios being sacred, is, to my apprehension sufficient for their condemnation, upon the grounds of reason and good taste. God, the soul, heaven, hell, eternity, made the matter of a song! that song intended as a pastime for a pleasant hour; not a preparative and assistant to devotion! It is awful to think of, repulsive, shocking! It is offensive to reason and common sense. Of this, the excellent and venerable John Newton makes a strong and lively representation in his Messiah.

But it is equally condemned by good

taste and decent sensibility. While this general objection lies against all representations of this nature, it applies with special emphasis to the subject matter of some oratorios, which are more than commonly censurable. Who, for instance, could bear to see the death of some dear relation, a father, or mother, enacted upon the stage; or, if thrown into numbers, make it an amusement to listen to the song?

Is not such an event one of those desolating calamities, from the contemplation of which the mind instinctively recoils, and which you would fain blot out of the memory for ever? Be your feelings, however, on this subject strong or weak, you could not, at least, countenance those, nor feel any sympathy with those whose sensibilities on the subject being less lively than your own, could make the sanctities of that death-chamber an antidote to *ennui*,—a pleasant contrivance to kill time. You look at the event in one point of view, the irreparable loss it occasioned: you recur to it with an undying grief and never think of the last groan, gasp, look of the dead, but you exclaim with sickening heart, "It is no dream, and I am desolate." They look upon it simply as a very clever show, a vastly interesting spectacle.

But to bring our analogy still closer; who could bear to see the death of a martyred friend, a bosom friend and generous benefactor, made the subject of a tragedy, a spectacle to amuse the vulgar; or theme of a song, intended as much to show the composer's skill who prepared the accompaniment, or the singer's mastery of the gamut, as the virtues of the deceased; suppose all that poetry, and music, and execution, and voice, could do to represent the atrocious deed in all its atrocity—the mournful catastrophe in all its mournfulness, who, with the feelings of a man much less those of a friend, could set out to see the deceased again expire; to hear again the unrighteous sentence of the judge, the ribald execration of the crowd, the forgiving prayer, the God-like benediction of the victim, and, at last, with painful and vivid verisimilitude, the cries, the groans, the convulsed and choking sobs of the dying man? No man, I venture to predict, with the heart of a man, could endure such a representa-

tion as this, the sufferer being his friend and benefactor. It would call for nerves of adamant and not of human fibre to endure it. It would be a moral crucifixion; it would be a torture only second to that of the hapless hero of the play or song; and it would be a sin, not only against all that is high and honourable, and noble, and generous, and endearing, and delicate, but against humanity itself. How, then, will they exculpate themselves from the blackness of this sin, who can, at the oratorio, hear the sufferings and death of the Son of God, it may be, alternate with chorus from the opera, or the air from the concert-room? How can they endure the scene which the witchery of poesy and music has conjured up in living semblance before their eyes? Methinks, if they felt anything like human beings, the place would be one Bochim—one place of tears. The voice of loud weeping would drown the sad music of the piece, and the air vibrate less to trump and quivering string than the frame of the audience with the strong spasm of sympathetic agony. Did we feel it as we ought, nature would writhe under the infliction at the oratorio as it writhes under the knife, and we should shun it as enfeebled patients do the rush and onset of over excitement.

EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

THE following passage, which we take from the "Weekly Christian News," a London paper, will be read with interest by those who perused the letters which we recently published on pulpit lectures:—

"We have long had an impression that the English pulpit would be greatly improved by adopting the habit, so common in Scotland, of expository preaching. The able exposition is, in fact, an able commentary delivered by the living voice; and as it must, from the nature of the case, draw largely from Scripture, it is the surest way to enlighten the audience respecting the teachings of the holy oracles. It may be said that topical discourses give greater scope for originality and the exercise of the reasoning faculties; but even if this allegation were capable of proof, which we hold

it is not, the question would arise whether the assumed advantage be an advantage at all, either to the preacher or his flock? The barrister who wanders from his brief is not likely to gain the case of his client, whatever originality may characterise his eloquence, or whatever force may be thrown into his logic. The Christian minister is a barrister, pleading the cause of God at the bar of human conscience, and the more original his oration is the worse for the cause he has in hand. In public meetings it is common to check the declaimer who forgets his subject by cries of "Question!" We have more than once heard passages in sermons which tempted us to cry "Question!"—a temptation to which, for obvious reasons, we did not yield. Of course it is perfectly true that a man may attempt exposition and yet wander from his thesis, but in that case the very idea of exposition is lost. Still, the motto of true exposition is "To the law and to the testimony." Its life and soul is "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." It necessitates the study of the Bible itself. This is its recommendation and its glory, and the earnest preacher who adopts it as one—we do not say the exclusive—mode of teaching will, of voluntary necessity, "search the Scriptures." This will assuredly keep him both from Rome and Germany, from superstition and rationalism, and whatever else may be said of his sermon, no one will be able to say that it was a cloud of verbiage, without a ray of light from the Sun of Righteousness. Again, so far as illus-

tration are concerned, the exposition has most decidedly the advantage; indeed, exposition is illustration, if it be anything at all; but we mean here the appropriate use of fact, incidents, and similitude, with which the multitude is familiar, as tending to bring home to every man's business and bosom the blessed truths of the Gospel. "Every scribe," says our Lord, "who is instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." This is not the first time that we have advocated expository teaching, but we have been led to make these remarks to-day in consequence of the perusal of a little volume* by the Rev. Thomas Alexander, of Chelsea, which has just issued from the press. The book is a perfect model of exposition, full of light and life, bringing the reader's thoughts into contact with the sublime wonders of that wonderful prayer of the Great Intercessor. Mr. Alexander's style is neat, forcible, condensed. There is not a word too much in his sentences, and his "application" is always happy. But we prize the book, chiefly because it is so full of the love, grace, and glory of that Divine Redeemer, without whom earth were a wilderness, and heaven an impossibility.

* "The Great High Priest within the Veil:" being an Exposition, Doctrinal and Practical, of chapter xvii. of John's Gospel. By the Rev. Thomas Alexander, M.A., Chelsea. London: James Brown, 14, Burton-place, Eaton-square.

Presbyterian Church in England.

THE SYNOD.!

THE Supreme Court of our Church will meet during the present month in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Difficult questions will again come before our brethren, the disposal of which will require much wisdom and prudence. Let there be special prayer offered, as

in past years, for the spirit of wisdom and of peace.

We believe that pretty full reports of the proceedings will be published daily in the "Northern Daily Express," a Newcastle paper, which may be ordered of the publishers.

We have been requested to insert

for the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at John Knox Church, and the supply of Mr. Keedy's pulpit, during his absence occasioned by the protracted illness and recent decease of his wife; the brethren expressing their sympathy with him under his bereavement.

Mr. Duncan reported that he had preached at Brighton, as appointed, and declared Hanover Church vacant, by the resignation of Mr. McDougall. In the name of the Kirk session, Mr. Duncan applied to the Presbytery to grant moderation in a call by that congregation. After some discussion as to their prospects of success, the application was granted and Mr. Duncan was appointed to preach and preside in the matter of a call at Brighton, on the 29th instant.

Communion rolls were called for, and the following were given in and attested by the moderator—

Regent Square Church, 555 names; Marylebone, 516; River Terrace, 385; Southampton, 306; Woolwich, 200; Chelsea, 195; London Wall, 171; Greenwich, 135; Dalston, 73; Caledonian Road, 60; St. John's Wood, 50; Bournemouth, 45; Guernsey, 33.

Dr. Weir reported that Dr. Stewart, of Leghorn, had declined to accept the call from Carlton Hill Church. Mr. Wright reported favourable of the stations at Newport and Portsmouth. Dr. Weir stated a reference from the Kirk session of River Terrace, on a case of discipline. Messrs. Chalmers (convener), Johnstone, and Duncan, were appointed a committee to examine the papers on the case and to report.

Mr. Wright gave notice of an overture to the synod on church extension, to be proposed at the next meeting of Presbytery. Adjourned to meet on the second Tuesday in February.

The Presbytery met on February 10th. Sederunt, Mr. Ballatyne (moderator, *p. t.*), Professors McCrie and Lorimer, Dr. Weir, Messrs. Chalmers, Fisher, Wright, Burns, Alexander, Don, Whyte, ministers; Messrs. Mitchell, Fulloch, Finch, Johnstone, Blyth, elders.

The minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

A committee on session records was appointed, consisting of Mr. Ballatyne, (convener), Messrs. Chalmers and Ritchie, to any of whom the records of Kirk sessions might be sent.

The schedule from St. George's Schools, Southwark, was attested.

The committee on the case of discipline from River Terrace not being prepared to give in a final report, was re-appointed, with the addition of Professor Lorimer, Messrs. Duncan and Blyth.

Mr. Duncan reported that the minister whom the congregation at Brighton had intended to call, having decidedly refused to accept their call, after consultation with the Kirk session, he had not fulfilled the appointment of the Presbytery. His conduct was approved.

Mr. Wright's overture on church extension was transmitted.

The Presbytery adjourned to meet on the second Tuesday of March.

PRESBYTERY OF NEWCASTLE.

This Presbytery held its quarterly meeting in the John Knox Church, Newcastle, on Tuesday, the 10th March.

Present:—The Rev. D. M. Stuart, moderator; the Rev. Dr. Paterson; Messrs. Anderson, Duncan, Hardie, McKenzie, Reid, Storie, and Wrightson, ministers; Messrs. Freeman, Kerr, Lonie, and Richardson, elders. The meeting having been duly constituted, the minutes of former meetings were read and sustained.

Mr. McKenzie's motion anent the payment of the clerk for extracts, was unanimously agreed to.

A communication from the Kirk Session of St. John's, South Shields, respectfully acknowledging receipt of the communication from the Presbytery in regard to the St. John's Sessional Schools was laid on the table and read.

The clerk read a letter from the Rev. A. Saphir, stating that in consequence of indisposition, he would be unable to preach and preside at the induction of Mr. Henderson, at Hexham on the 11th. Mr. Wrightson was appointed to take Mr. Saphir's place.

Mr. Wrightson having stated that in consequence of his not being able to obtain a comfortable lodging up till this time, and there being no prospect of his doing so, the congregation at Wark had it in contemplation to raise funds for erecting a manse, requested the Presbytery to furnish him with a recommendation of this object to the church and Christian public. The Court unanimously agreed to grant such recommendation, and the moderator and clerk were appointed to prepare it.

Dr. Paterson, in name of the Session of St. George's Church, Sunderland, petitioned the Presbytery for leave to the St. George's congregation to elect an assistant and successor, and take all the steps necessary thereanent. Having heard statement of a highly satisfactory nature in regard to the present position and future prospects of St. George's congregation from Dr. Paterson and Mr. Lonie, it was moved,

seconded, and unanimously agreed to grant the application; and Messrs. Duncan and Hardie were appointed a committee to prepare an expression of the Presbytery's high respect for Dr. Paterson's character, position, and long labours in Sunderland, for insertion in the records of the Presbytery.

There was then laid upon the table and read a petition from Messrs. John W. Lamb, and Terrot Glover, elders in St. John's Church, South Shields, complaining of a printed document which had been sent to them in envelopes, addressed in the handwriting of the Rev. John Storie, praying that Mr. Storie be enjoined not to circulate said document, and that the whole of the matters referred to in it be constitutionally investigated by the proper courts of the Church. The document complained of having been also read, it was moved and agreed that, in reference to that part of the prayer of the petition, that the printed document addressed "To Messrs. Lamb and Glover, No. 1," and signed by Mr. Storie, and now in the hands of the Court, be not circulated. The Presbytery strictly prohibit Mr. Storie from circulating said document during the continuance of the case—take up the case on its merits, and that the Court meet for this purpose in the John Knox Church on Wednesday, the 18th March, at 11 a.m. This finding was intimated to parties who were summoned *apud acta* to be present at said meeting.

Mr. Storie presented a petition, craving that a certain portion of a minute engrossed in the St. John's Church Session record be erased. The Presbytery enjoined that the portion of the minute complained of be deleted, as craved. To this all parties consented.

Mr. Storie gave notice that at a future meeting he might move for a visitation Presbytery, to be held in St. John's Church, South Shields.

It was moved by Mr. Duncan, seconded by Mr. Freeman, and carried—"That the finding of the Synod in regard to that portion of the sentence in Mrs. Knox's case, that the Presbytery communicate to Mrs. Knox a copy of its finding, be now obtempered."

A petition from the congregation of the preaching station in Gateshead, signed by 160 persons, praying the Presbytery to take the necessary steps for having them formed into a regular congregation, was laid on the table and read. After deliberation it was resolved to transmit the petition *simpliciter* to the Synod. From this Mr. Anderson dissented, and protested for leave to complain to the Synod.

School schedules from Hott, Keildar, and Tarsset were laid on the table, examined,

attested, and ordered to be transmitted to the School Committee, with recommendation for a grant.

The next quarterly meeting was appointed to be held in the John Knox Church on Tuesday, the 9th of June, at 11 a.m.

The meeting closed with prayer.

The Presbytery met in the church at Hexham, on Wednesday, the 11th, for the induction of the Rev. Robert Henderson to this church. Present—the Rev. William Wrightson, moderator, *pro tem.*; Messrs. Stuart, McKenzie, Henderson, and Reid.

The meeting was duly constituted; and Messrs. Crole, of Brampton, and Forsyth, of Bavington, being present, were associated. The edict was returned duly served and attested. It was then moved and agreed that the induction services do now proceed. Thereafter Mr. Wrightson proceeded to the pulpit and conducted divine worship, preaching an able and appropriate sermon from Eccl. xii. 11. He then narrated the various steps which had been taken since the vacancy, and demanded if there were any objections to be taken to the life or doctrine of Mr. Henderson. None having been stated, he then put the usual questions, to all of which Mr. Henderson returned the usual satisfactory answers. Thereafter he engaged in solemn prayer, and in name, and by authority of the Presbytery, declared Mr. Henderson pastor of the Hexham Church and congregation, and entitled to all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

Mr. Stuart then suitably addressed the minister and the people, and at the close Mr. Henderson was cordially welcomed by the people of his new charge in the usual way.

Mr. Reid was appointed to moderate in the Delaval Session during the vacancy; and the edict declaring the church at Delaval vacant, was ordered to be read from the pulpit there on Sabbath the 15th by the officiating minister.

The meeting closed with prayer.

BERWICK PRESBYTERY.

Met at Berwick-on-Tweed on January 13th. Mr. William Henry Douglas gave his trials for Ordination. In all the parts of his examination, Mr. Douglas gave great satisfaction to the Court; and all his trials were approved and sustained. At the request of Mr. Murdoch, moderator, *p. t.*, of Horncliffe Session, the Presbyter appointed the ordination to be proceeded with on Thursday 29th instant, at twelve o'clock, noon. Mr. Fraser was appointed to preach at Horncliffe, on Sabbath, the 18th, and to serve the edict, Mr.

Cant to preach, and Mr. Robinson to address the Minister and people; Mr. Terras to give an Address on Presbyterianism, to put the questions and preside at the Ordination. Adjourned to meet at Horncliffe on 29th instant, at half-past eleven o'clock, a.m.

Met at Horncliffe on January 29th. Rev. Mr. Rodger, of Coldstream, associated. Mr. Fraser returned the Edict duly served and attested, which was again read, *mutatis mutandis*, publicly before the Congregation, and no objections being taken, Mr. Cant preached from John vi. 66—"From that time many went back, and walked with him no more." Mr. Terras gave an Address on Presbyterianism. The Presbytery then proceeded with the regular steps in Mr. Douglas's Ordination. Mr. Terras, having put the usual questions to him, did, with the help of the brethren present, by prayer and the imposition of hands, solemnly ordain Mr. Douglas, and set him apart to the office and work of the holy ministry, and admitted and inducted him into ministerial possession of the Church with all the rights and emoluments appertaining thereunto. The right hand of fellowship was given by all the brethren present to their newly-ordained brother, Mr. Douglas. Mr. Robinson gave the charge to the young Minister and to the people; and Mr. Douglas was welcomed by the Congregation, at its dismissal, with the usual mark of cordiality and respect. The Presbytery having resumed their Session, Mr. Douglas, upon promise to subscribe the Formula, when required, was received as a member of the Court, and his name was added to the roll.

February 24th.—Met at Berwick-on-Tweed. Mr. Stewart reported that Mr. James Hay, the Teacher-elect of Norham School, had been examined by the Presbytery's School-Committee, and found qualified. His appointment was confirmed. The Home Mission Schedule from Lowick was read and attested. The books from Belford, and the Etal cash book were examined and attested. The Home Mission Collections were reported so far as they had been taken. Mr. Fraser reported that the Church property and School at Lowick are now *free from debt*. Considering that this is owing, under the good Providence of God, mainly to Mr. Fraser's exertions, the Presbytery agreed to enter upon their record a statement of their high satisfaction and cordial congratulation upon this most important result being attained. Mr. Murdoch having stated that the Bankhill Session had written again to Mr. John Veiteh to return that part of the furniture that he had acknowledged belonged to the Session, but that Mr.

Veiteh had taken no notice of the letter, it was moved by Mr. Stewart, and seconded by Mr. Fraser—"That the Moderator of Bankhill Session having stated to the Presbytery that Mr. Veiteh had refused to return the School furniture which he had acknowledged belonged to the Session, the Presbytery express their surprise at this statement, and advise the Session to deal with Mr. Veiteh according to the rules of the Church." It was also moved by Mr. Terras, and seconded by Mr. Ryder—"That as this matter has not come regularly before the Presbytery, the Court refuse to take any notice of it in the Minutes." The first motion was carried by *four to two*. Messrs. Terras and Ryder entered their dissent. Next Meeting was appointed to be held at Berwick on the last Tuesday of May, at eleven o'clock, a.m.

Intelligence.

GREENWICH.—On Thursday evening the 26th of February, a Meeting was held in the vestry of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, when the Rev. G. H. Duncan presented Mr. Davis, the Precentor, with a handsomely bound family Bible, the gift of the members of the class for the practice of sacred music, as a mark of their high esteem for him, and in recognition of his valuable services in conducting the class. Several of the Office-bearers also made some appropriate remarks on the occasion, and complimented Mr. Davis on the good feeling existing between him and his pupils, and on the efforts he has made to improve the psalmody in the church.

GATESHEAD PREACHING STATION.—On Wednesday evening, January 7th, at a meeting held in the vestry of Melbourne Street Presbyterian Church, Mr. E. T. Reed, in the name of the Sabbath School teachers connected with the above station, presented the Rev. James Ritchie with Professor Lorimer's "Historical Biography of Patriek Hamilton," and Dr. Krummaehner's "Suffering Saviour," as a token of their appreciation of his exertion on behalf of the Sabbath School, during the period he has been labouring in Gateshead. Mr. Ritchie has accepted a call from the Free Church Congregation at Stronness, Orkney, and leaves this locality, followed by the good wishes and prayers of many friends, to whom he has endeared himself by his amiability of disposition and consistency of character.

[Want of space compels us, reluctantly, to leave over several notices and communications which are in type; among others a report of the Presbytery of Lancashire.]

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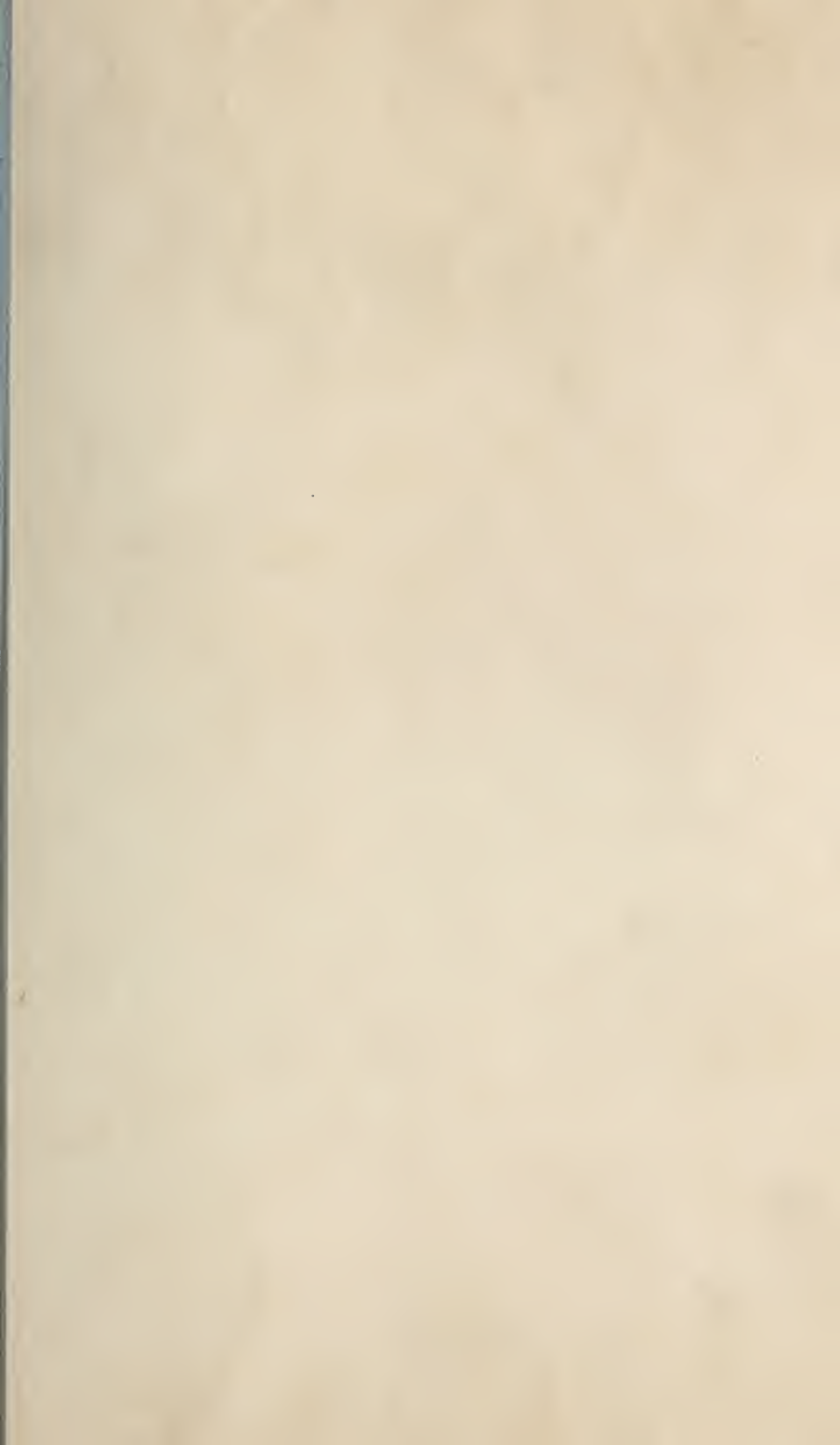
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